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Collaboration Leads to Innovation: Camp Blanding and Navy Entomology Center of Excellence Partnership

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By Lt. Hanayo Arimoto, Navy Entomology Center of Excellence



With challenges such as pesticide resistance on the rise, it has become increasingly important to come up with new solutions to combat pests and support our customers.

As a budding Navy Entomologist with just over two years in the service, I've learned how important it is to build and maintain partnerships between centers. These collaborations are absolutely essential to the testing and evaluation of novel vector management control technology and techniques used in force health protection.

I feel privileged to be a part of one such ongoing collaboration between The Navy Entomology Center of Excellence (NECE) and Florida Army National Guard's [Camp Blanding Joint Training Center \(CBJTC\)](#). As a result of our thriving and successful partnership, we have been able to develop innovative products, techniques, and solutions to better protect deployed service members from blood-feeding and disease-transmitting arthropods.

The importance of CBJTC's vast sprawling campus to NECE's research capabilities cannot be understated. CBJTC provides NECE an invaluable testing ground, making research collaborations with many esteemed organizations possible. Our research partners include the CDC, the USDA, and many other institutions from academia and private industry. An additional benefit that the CBJTC provides is the opportunity for joint research and development efforts between the Services.

Dr. Gary Breeden, Entomology Program Manager, [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center \(NMCPHC\)](#) recognize the significance of CBJTC being able to support NECE's mission.

"All these opportunities for collaboration bring extremely valuable "fresh ideas" and potential solutions to better protect deployed warfighters," said Breeden.

On April 21, the Department of Defense awarded CBJTC the 2015 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award for Natural Resources Conservation, Large Installation.

The award recognizes large installations (over 10,000 acres) that promote the conservation of natural resources, including the identification, protection, and restoration of biological resources and habitats, the sound long-term management and use of the land and its resources; and the promotion of a conservation ethic.

When Jerry Kerce, CBJTC's Integrated Pest Management Coordinator, was interviewed to comment on winning the award, Kerce cited CBJTC's partnership with NECE as an indispensable factor in receiving such prestigious recognition.

"One of the major indicators that helped us win the award was our 12 ongoing research initiatives including research project collaborations with the Navy Entomology Center of Excellence (NECE)," said Kerce.

Within the first two months of being stationed at NECE, I was going on day trips to CBJTC, getting involved with various projects and meeting Jerry Kerce. One week I would be involved with testing adult mosquito control methods and products, the next week, tick control methods and surveillance. On one ride along, Kerce showed me some of the facilities and spaces available at CBJTC. I was awed by various types of field sites available at CBJTC, which allowed for a myriad of projects to be completed at once.

According to Kerce, CBJTC is pleased to play an important role in NECE's bid to become a World Health Organization (WHO) collaborative center.

NECE's work at CBJTC has included testing new products for the U. S. President's Malaria Initiative, a \$1.3 billion dollar effort in 17 sub-Saharan African countries to reduce malaria by 50 percent. Additionally, NECE completed numerous projects at CBJTC that have resulted in the assignment of

National Stock Numbers for equipment and pesticides that will directly aid in the protection of the deployed warfighter.

Should NECE become a WHO Collaborative Center (CC), this command would become the only WHO CC in the world that would be testing new public health insecticide dispersal systems and application technologies.

According to Capt. Eric Hoffman, NMCPHC Executive Officer, NECE and Camp Blanding have worked closely together for years.

“NECE and Camp Blanding worked together well before multi-agency collaborations and jointness were common, to address significant insect-borne disease challenges that impact readiness,” said Hoffman.

“The award Camp Blanding received acknowledges and validates the effectiveness of this relationship in producing products that protect our most valuable asset, our people.”

“Overall, the goal of our collaboration is to leverage joint assets in order to increase the value of the products and services we offer to our customers,” said Cmdr. Darryl Arfsten, Officer in Charge NECE.

“Future plans for NECE and Camp Blanding collaborations will only intensify as the collaboration continues its importance in testing products to benefit deployed warfighters.”

I genuinely hope that NECE and CBJTR continue to work together in supporting each other’s goals and missions. With challenges such as pesticide resistance on the rise, it has become increasingly important to come up with new solutions to combat pests and support our customers.

For more information on the Navy Entomology Center of Excellence, visit:

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/nece/Pages/default.aspx>.

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